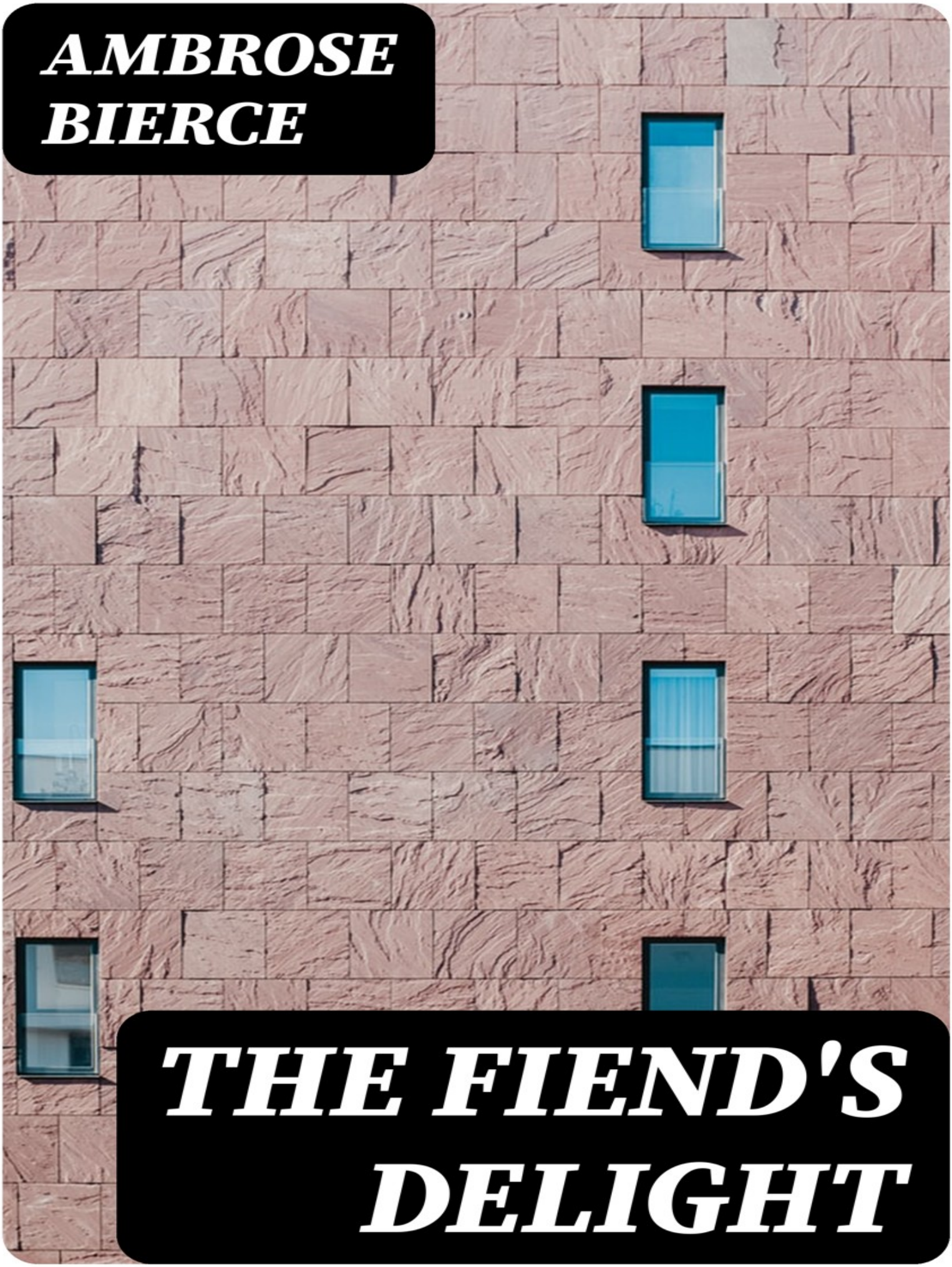
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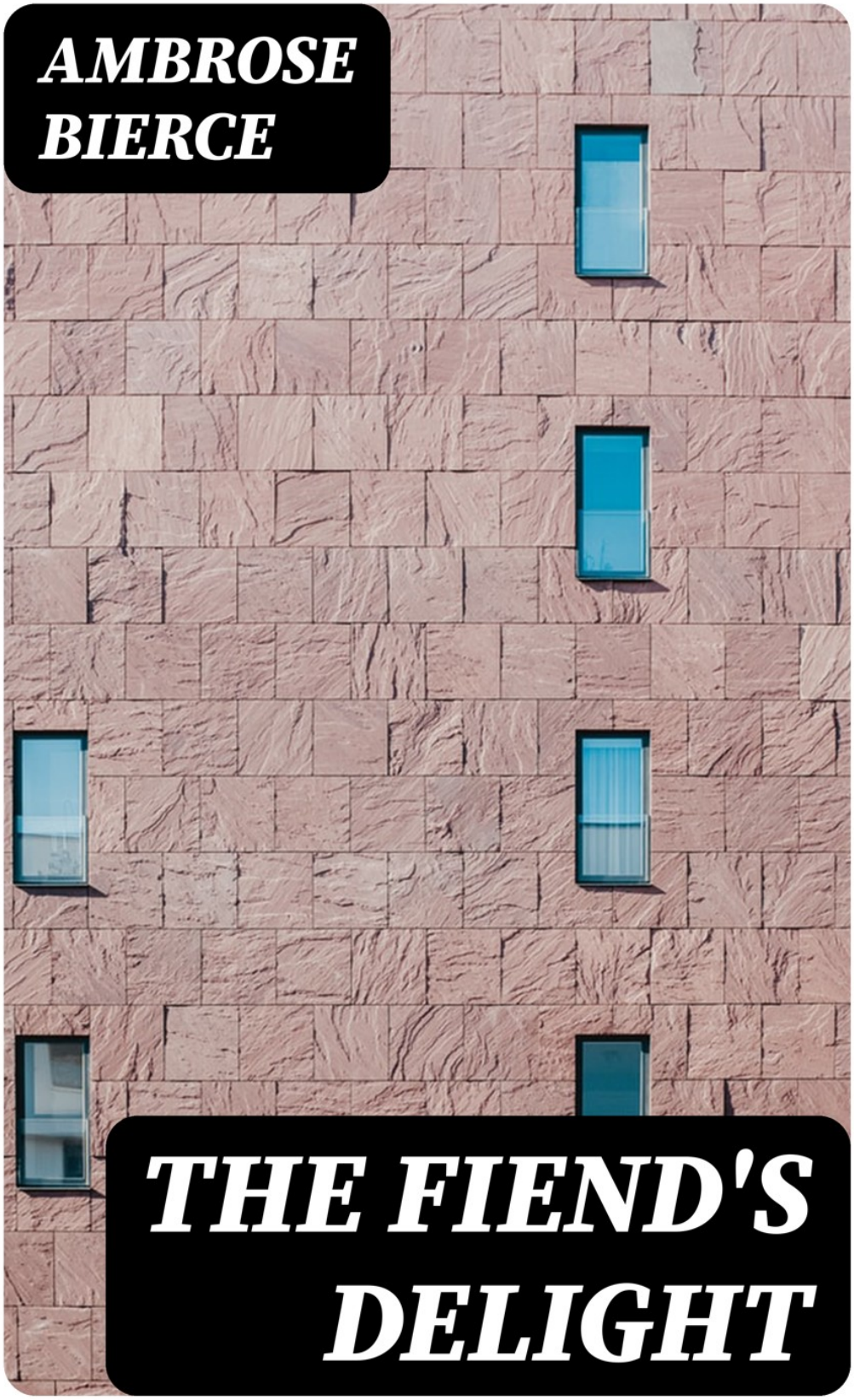
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THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

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The atrocities constituting this “cold collation” of diabolisms are taken mainly from various Californian journals. They are cast in the American language, and liberally enriched with unintelligibility. If they shall prove incomprehensible on this side of the Atlantic, the reader can pass to the other side at a moderately extortionate charge. In the pursuit of my design I think I have killed a good many people in one way and another; but the reader will please to observe that they were not people worth the trouble of leaving alive. Besides, I had the interests of my collaborator to consult. In writing, as in compiling, I have been ably assisted by my scholarly friend Mr. Satan; and to this worthy gentleman must be attributed most of the views herein set forth. While the plan of the work is partly my own, its spirit is wholly his; and this illustrates the ascendancy of the creative over the merely imitative mind. Palmam qui meruit ferat—I shall be content with the profit.

DOD GRILE.

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SOME FICTION.

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“One More Unfortunate.”

It was midnight—a black, wet, midnight—in a great city by the sea. The church clocks were booming the hour, in tones half-smothered by the marching rain, when an officer of the watch saw a female figure glide past him like a ghost in the gloom, and make directly toward a wharf. The officer felt that some dreadful tragedy was about to be enacted, and started in pursuit. Through the sleeping city sped those two dark figures like shadows athwart a tomb. Out along the deserted wharf to its farther end fled the mysterious fugitive, the guardian of the night vainly endeavouring to overtake, and calling to her to stay. Soon she stood upon the extreme end of the pier, in the scourging rain which lashed her fragile figure and blinded her eyes with other tears than those of grief. The night wind tossed her tresses wildly in air, and beneath her bare feet the writhing billows struggled blackly upward for their prey. At this fearful moment the

panting officer stumbled and fell! He was badly bruised; he felt angry and misanthropic. Instead of rising to his feet, he sat doggedly up and began chafing his abraded shin. The desperate woman raised her white arms heavenward for the final plunge, and the voice of the gale seemed like the dread roaring of the waters in her ears, as down, down, she went—in imagination—to a black death among the spectral piles. She backed a few paces to secure an impetus, cast a last look upon the stony officer, with a wild shriek sprang to the awful verge and came near losing her balance. Recovering herself with an effort, she turned her face again to the officer, who was clawing about for his missing club. Having secured it, he started to leave.

In a cosy, vine-embowered cottage near the sounding sea, lives and suffers a blighted female. Nothing being known of her past history, she is treated by her neighbours with marked respect. She never speaks of the past, but it has been remarked that whenever the stalwart form of a certain policeman passes her door, her clean, delicate face assumes an expression which can only be described as frozen profanity. The Strong Young Man of Colusa.

Professor Cramer conducted a side-show in the wake of a horse-opera, and the same sojourned at Colusa. Enters unto the side show a powerful young man of the Colusa sort, and would see his money's worth. Blandly and with conscious pride the Professor directs the young man's attention to his fine collection of living snakes. Lithely the blacksnake uncoils in his sight. Voluminously the bloated boa convolves before him. All horrent the cobra exalts his hooded head, and the spanning jaws fly open. Quivers and chitters the tail

of the cheerful rattlesnake; silently slips out the forked tongue, and is as silently absorbed. The fangless adder warps up the leg of the Professor, lays clammy coils about his neck, and pokes a flattened head curiously into his open mouth. The young man of Colusa is interested; his feelings transcend expression. Not a syllable breathes he, but with a deep-drawn sigh he turns his broad back upon the astonishing display, and goes thoughtfully forth into his native wild. Half an hour later might have been seen that brawny Colusan, emerging from an adjacent forest with a strong faggot.

Then this Colusa young man unto the appalled Professor thus: “Ther ain't no good place yer in Kerloosy fur fittin' out serpence to be subtler than all the beasts o' the field. Ther's enmity atween our seed and ther seed, an' it shell brooze ther head.” And with a singleness of purpose and a rapt attention to detail that would have done credit to a lean porker garnering the strewn kernels behind a deaf old man who plants his field with corn, he started in upon that reptilian host, and exterminated it with a careful thoroughness of extermination.

The Glad New Year.

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A poor brokendown drunkard returned to his dilapidated domicile early on New Year's morn. The great bells of the churches were jarring the creamy moonlight which lay above the soggy undercrust of mud and snow. As he heard their joyous peals, announcing the birth of a new year, his heart smote his old waistcoat like a remorseful sledge-hammer.

“Why,” soliloquized he, “should not those bells also proclaim the advent of a new resolution? I have not made one for several weeks, and it's about time. I'll swear off.”

He did it, and at that moment a new light seemed to be shed upon his pathway; his wife came out of the house with a tin lantern. He rushed frantically to meet her. She saw the new and holy purpose in his eye. She recognised it readily—she had seen it before. They embraced and wept. Then stretching the wreck of what had once been a manly form to its full length, he raised his eyes to heaven and one hand as near there as he could get it, and there in the pale moonlight, with only his wondering wife, and the angels, and a cow or two, for witnesses, he swore he would from that moment abstain from all intoxicating liquors until death should them part. Then looking down and tenderly smiling into the eyes of his wife, he said: “Is it not well, dear one?” With a face beaming all over with a new happiness, she replied:

“Indeed it is, John—let's take a drink.” And they took one, she with sugar and he plain.

The spot is still pointed out to the traveller. The Late Dowling, Senior.

My friend, Jacob Dowling, Esq., had been spending the day very agreeably in his counting-room with some companions, and at night retired to the domestic circle to ravel out some intricate accounts. Seated at his parlour table he ordered his wife and children out of the room and addressed himself to business. While clambering wearily up a column of figures he felt upon his cheek the touch of something that seemed to cling clammily to the skin like the caress of a naked oyster. Thoughtfully setting down the result of his addition so far as he had proceeded with it, he turned about and looked up.

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said he, “but you have not the advantage of my acquaintance.”

“Why, Jake,” replied the apparition—whom I have thought it useless to describe—“don't you know me?”

“I confess that your countenance is familiar,” returned my friend, “but I cannot at this moment recall your name. I never forget a face, but names I cannot remember.”

“Jake!” rumbled the spectre with sepulchral dignity, a look of displeasure crawling across his pallid features, “you're foolin'.”

“I give you my word I am quite serious. Oblige me with your name, and favour me with a statement of your business with me at this hour.”

The disembodied party sank uninvited into a chair, spread out his knees and stared blankly at a Dutch clock with an air of weariness and profound discouragement. Perceiving that his guest was making himself tolerably comfortable my friend turned again to his figures, and silence reigned supreme. The fire in the grate burned

noiselessly with a mysterious blue light, as if it could do more if it wished; the Dutch clock looked wise, and swung its pendulum with studied exactness, like one who is determined to do his precise duty and shun responsibility; the cat assumed an attitude of intelligent neutrality. Finally the spectre trained his pale eyes upon his host, pulled in a long breath and remarked:

“Jake, I'm yur dead father. I come back to have a talk with ye 'bout the way things is agoin' on. I want to know 'f you think it's right notter recognise yur dead parent?”

“It is a little rough on you, dear,” replied the son without looking up, “but the fact is that [7 and 3 are 10, and 2 are 12, and 6 are 18] it is so long since you have been about [and 3 off are 15] that I had kind of forgotten, and [2 into 4 goes twice, and 7 into 6 you can't] you know how it is yourself. May I be permitted to again inquire the precise nature of your present business?”

“Well, yes—if you wont talk anything but shop I s'pose I must come to the p'int. Isay! you don't keep any thing to drink 'bout yer, do ye—Jake?”

“14 from 23 are 9—I'll get you something when we get done. Please explain how we can serve one another.”

“Jake, I done everything for you, and you ain't done nothin' for me since I died. I want a monument bigger'n Dave Broderick's, with an eppytaph in gilt letters, by Joaquin Miller. I can't git into any kind o' society till I have 'em. You've no idee how exclusive they are where I am.”

This dutiful son laid down his pencil and effected a stiffly vertical attitude. He was all attention:

“Anything else to-day?” he asked—rather sneeringly, I grieve to state.

“No-o-o, I don't think of anything special,” drawled the ghost reflectively; “I'd like to have an iron fence around it to keep the cows off, but I s'pose that's included.”

“Of course! And a gravel walk, and a lot of abalone shells, and fresh posies daily; a marble angel or two for company, and anything else that will add to your comfort. Have you any other extremely reasonable request to make of me?”

“Yes—since you mention it. I want you to contest my will. Horace Hawes is having his'n contested.”

“My fine friend, you did not make any will.”

“That ain't o' no consequence. You forge me a good 'un and contest that.”

“With pleasure, sir; but that will be extra. Now indulge me in one question. You spoke of the society where you reside. Where do you reside?”

The Dutch clock pounded clamorously upon its brazen gong a countless multitude of hours; the glowing coals fell like an avalanche through the grate, spilling all over the cat, who exalted her voice in a squawk like the deathwail of a stuck pig, and dashed affrighted through the window. A smell of scorching fur pervaded the place, and under cover of it the aged spectre walked into the mirror, vanishing like a dream. “Love's Labour Lost.”

Joab was a beef, who was tired of being courted for his clean, smooth skin. So he backed through a narrow gateway six or eight times, which made his hair stand the wrong way. He then went and rubbed his fat sides against a charred log.

This made him look untidy. You never looked worse in your life than Joab did.

“Now,” said he, “I shall be loved for myself alone. I will change my name, and hie me to pastures new, and all the affection that is then lavished upon me will be pure and disinterested.”

So he strayed off into the woods and came out at old Abner Davis' ranch. The two things Abner valued most were a windmill and a scratching-post for hogs. They were equally beautiful, and the fame of their comeliness had gone widely abroad. To them Joab naturally paid his attention. The windmill, who was called Lucille Ashtonbury Clifford, received him with expressions of the liveliest disgust. His protestations of affection were met by creakings of contempt, and as he turned sadly away he was rewarded by a sound spank from one of her fans. Like a gentlemanly beef he did not deign to avenge the insult by overturning Lucille Ashtonbury; and it is well for him that he did not, for old Abner stood by with a pitchfork and a trinity of dogs.

Disgusted with the selfish heartlessness of society, Joab shambled off and was passing the scratching-post without noticing her. (Her name was Arabella Cliftonbury Howard.) Suddenly she kicked away a multitude of pigs who were at her feet, and called to the rolling beef of uncanny exterior:

“Comeer!”

Joab paused, looked at her with his ox-eyes, and gravely marching up, commenced a vigorous scratching against her.

“Arabella,” said he, “do you think you could love a shaggy-hided beef with black hair? Could you love him for himself alone?”

Arabella had observed that the black rubbed off, and the hair lay sleek when stroked the right way.

“Yes, I think so; could you?”

This was a poser: Joab had expected her to talk business. He did not reply. It was only her arch way; she thought, naturally, that the best way to win any body's love was to be a fool. She saw her mistake. She had associated with hogs all her life, and this fellow was a beef! Mistakes must be rectified very speedily in these matters.

“Sir, I have for you a peculiar feeling; I may say a tenderness. Hereafter you, and you only, shall scratch against Arabella Cliftonbury Howard!”

Joab was delighted; he stayed and scratched all day. He was loved for himself alone, and he did not care for anything but that. Then he went home, made an elaborate toilet, and returned to astonish her. Alas! old Abner had been about, and seeing how Joab had worn her smooth and useless, had cut her down for firewood. Joab gave one glance, then walked solemnly away into a “clearing,” and getting comfortably astride a blazing heap of logs, made a barbacue of himself!

After all, Lucille Ashtonbury Clifford, the light-headed windmill, seems to have got the best of all this. I have observed that the light-headed commonly get the best of everything in this world; which the wooden-headed and the beef-headed regard as an outrage. I am not prepared to say if it is or not. A Comforter.

William Bunker had paid a fine of two hundred dollars for beating his wife. After getting his receipt he went moodily home and seated himself at the domestic hearth. Observing